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ABSTRACT

This booklet explains in a step by step procedure how to develop a career education contest designed to provide incentive and recognition for students in the awareness, exploration, and preparation phases of career education. Written from a regional viewpoint (based on experience in a multi-district contest), the guide briefly describes these eight steps: Establish the purpose; secure administrative support; specify guidelines; specify criteria for judging; reproduce and distribute guidelines; raise prize money; secure judges; and secure a suitable site. The document also includes a check list for the contest day and a discussion of the program's educational value. (This guide is ore of several focusing on the development of different components of a career education program.) (BM)

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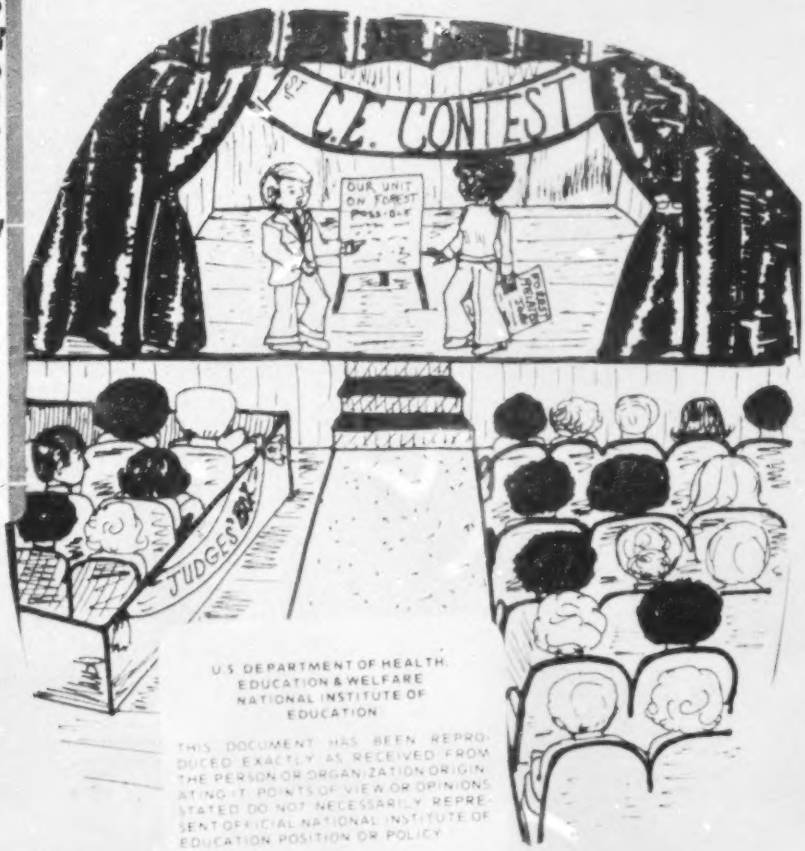

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"How To Develop and Conduct A Career Education Contest"

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A Generic Definition of Career Education
by
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"In a generic sense, the definition of Career Education must obviously be derived from the definition of Career and Education. "Career" is the totality of work one does in his/her lifetime. "Education" is the totality of experience through which one learns. Based on these two (2) definitions, "Career Education" is defined as follows: "Career Education" is the totality of experience through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of his/her way of living.

Q. WHAT DOES THIS GUIDE DEAL WITH?

A. This guide considers from a regional viewpoint:

- The steps involved in conceptualizing and developing a career education contest.
- A check list for the contest day.
- Our evaluation of the input versus the output.

You should be able, after reading this guide, to develop your own contest, be it local or regional.

NOW, LET'S CONSIDER THE STEPS IN DEVELOPING A CAREER EDUCATION CONTEST.

STEP ONE:

Establish the purpose(s).

in our case: The purpose was to provide incentive and recognition for students in the awareness, exploration, and preparation phases of career education.

comments: A contest can do two (2) things for a career education program: (1) It can motivate participants to a high level of productivity; and (2) It can accentuate the outcomes of career education, such as the careers which high school seniors select.

STEP TWO:

Secure administrative support.

in our case: We presented the broad dimensions of the contest to our career education coordinators, and after their approval, to the governing board of the Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative.

comments: The coordinators were only lukewarm to the contest idea, because they were fearful of "hurt feelings" of those who did not win and likewise the board granted approval, but not enthusiastically.

STEP THREE:

Specify guidelines.

in our case: We divided the contest into three (3) divisions and said:

Division I: Awareness

1) Classes or groups of students in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6.

2) Special education classes.

Note: Special education had a separate set of guidelines.

3) Each system will have only one (1) entry per grade level.

Division II: Exploration

1) An individual or group of students will not exceed ten (10) in grades 7, 8, and 9.

2) Entries will be unlimited.

Division III: Preparation

1) Individual students in grades 10, 11, and 12.

2) Entries will be unlimited.

Further, we specified prizes, certificates, monitors and qualifications of judges.

comments: To specify careful and judicious guidelines for a regional career education contest, K-12, is no small undertaking. It is best to formulate the guidelines and then have the locals react to them. It is easy to overlook problems in their formulation.

STEP FOUR:

Specify criteria for judging.

in our case: In awareness we said:

Contestants will be judged according to the following criteria:

(a) 50 points—evidence of academic concepts and skills in unit.

Examples:

- language arts—listening, reading, speaking, and writing—used in reading, interviews, discussions, and letter-writing.
- math skills—addition, subtraction, multiplication, etc.—used in learning about the bank, grocery store, coal industry, etc.
- social studies—understanding the history of a career, how different careers call for different lifestyles, how an industry, such as coal, affects those around it.

(b) 20 points – evidence of career education concepts and skills in unit.

Examples:

- career awareness
- economic awareness
- educational awareness
- decision-making
- human relations skills
- positive attitude toward work
- positive self-concept

(c) 20 points – quality and quantity of student involvement in unit.

Example:

- Participants will be interviewed by the judges after the presentation. Questions will be designed to ascertain students' comprehension of academic and career education concepts and skills presented in the unit as well as their involvement in planning and implementing the unit.

(d) 10 points—evidence of creativity in conception and delivery of unit.

Example:

Note: •No restrictions are placed on the career education units; i.e., they may have been taught three years ago or within the past month; they may come from any source, etc.

comments: It is helpful to give examples, such as a performance activity which could be a presentation of *Tom Sawyer* from a theater unit. Each criterion can be clarified by carefully selected examples.

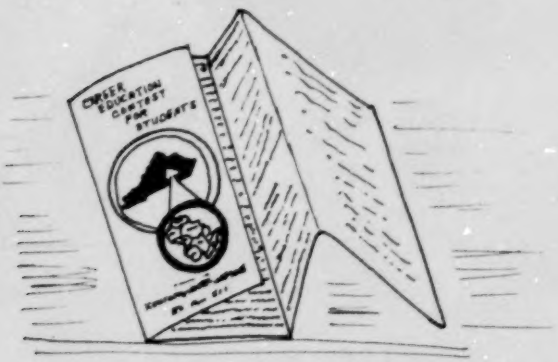
STEP FIVE:

Reproduce guidelines for contest and distribute.

in our case: We took nine (9) typewritten pages to the printer who reduced the size of the print and got all our information on a 8½"x14" sheet. This made an attractive piece that could be folded to an envelope size.

comments: Considering time, energy and the expense of the paper, it did not cost us any more than doing our own duplication and the final product was much more attractive.

Here's what our contest brochure looked like:



STEP SIX: **Raise prize money.**

in our case: We contacted businesses and industry in the region and raised $1,870.00

comments: Although this exercise required time, energy and courage, it enabled career education to tell its story as well as strengthen the ties between school and community.

STEP SEVEN: **Secure judges.**

in our case: We asked each school district to submit the names of five (5) persons who would make competent judges. We then contacted by letter all those submitted, and asked them to reply on a self-addressed card if they would be willing to judge. Those who responded affirmatively were oriented personally by a member of the regional staff.

comments: 1) Competent judges are vital to the contest, and it is only right to provide the best possible when so much time and energy is expended by participants in preparing for their presentations.

2) It is important to have a range of representative careers on the judging panel, such as educators, parents, ministers, business persons and industry representatives.

STEP EIGHT: **Secure a suitable site.**

in our case: Because the contest was being held on a school day, we had to have three (3) separate locations in the same city: a church, a school, and a community college.

comments: If the contest is not held on a school day, then it is possible to have an entire school for the purpose, but participation may be less if it is held on a Saturday.

CONDUCTING THE CONTEST

NOW THE BIG DAY IS HERE. ARE YOU PREPARED? FOLLOWING IS A CHECK LIST THAT WE WERE CONCERNED ABOUT:

- Bus schedules (Would participants arrive on time and leave on time?)
- Judges (Would they all show? We had some extras as stand-bys.)
- Equipment
  - chart stands
  - extension cords
  - blackboards, erasures, chalk
  - pianos (watch this one, because securing and moving one is a major task)
  - amplifiers
  - electrical outlets
  - ample staging space
  - chairs for audience
- Evaluation forms for judges
- Lunch for judges and participants (participants ate at nearby schools)
- Prizes
- Awarding of prizes
- Clean-up
- Adjustment procedures (there is nearly always some problem that arises, such as some participant not arriving on time)

IS IT WORTH IT?

Each contest producer obviously will have to answer in terms of input and output.

May we share our reaction?

1) Negative reactions:

- Three (3) regional staff members spent approximately two (2) months on the project.
- Generally, school personnel were lukewarm toward the contest. Some said, "Let's don't do that again."
- Logistical problems with three (3) locations conducting the contest simultaneously were manageable, but fractured the impact of the contest.
- Some groups felt they should have won when they did not.

2) Positive reactions:

- Participants generally did outstanding work in preparing for and performing during the contest.
- Career education received excellent exposure through the media and involvement of businesses and industry in raising the prize money was positive.
- Students generally enjoyed the experience.
- Over 1,000 students participated in the contest.

3) Probably the time and energy expended on the contest was not worth it, as a one-shot effort. However, an annual contest, once established, should not require as much time and effort and can become an excellent tool in a career education program. Are we going to have one this year? The jury is still out.

Additional information on Career Education Contests can be procured by contacting:

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